

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE GRANT RECIPIENT FOR 1996: PRESERVING SUSTAINABILITY: PREVENTION OF NON-SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH THE STATE OF THE REGION AND THE SUSTAINABILITY ACCORDS OF 1997

Grant Recipient: Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC)
Grant Title: Preserving Sustainability: Prevention of Non-sustainability through the State of the Region and the Sustainability Accords of 1997
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Project Period: 02/01/1997 - 04/03/1998
Affected Areas: The TJPD Region, including: Albermarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, & Nelson Counties and the City of Charlottesville

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT RATIONAL

In 1990, the *Thomas Jefferson Study to Preserve and Assess the Regional Environment* (TJSPARE) was undertaken as an attempt to determine the region's capacity to support planned development and its effects on the regional environment. One result of their efforts was the formation of the *Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council* (TJSC) in January 1994.

The Sustainability Council -- charged with "describ[ing] a future where our economic, human, social, and environmental health are assured" -- has taken upon itself the task of compiling and analyzing a list of sustainability indicators in order to measure progress made towards the vision of sustainability. Furthermore, it has been their goal to build consensus throughout the community on how to best attain a healthy and just future.

Work completed before receipt of the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant includes the following:

- i 1994 - Creation of mission statement, 7 principles, & 16 goals for a sustainable future
- i 1995 - Conference, *Toward a Sustainable Future*, aimed at developing draft visions for each of the 16 goals on how to implement sustainability
- i 1995 - Conference, *Toward a Sustainable Future II: How will we know?*, to gather ideas on how to measure progress towards each of the 16 visions
- i 1996 - June, first report released, entitled *Indicators of Sustainability: Interim report*, which listed 69 visions of a sustainable future and 159 indicators to measure progress

SCOPE OF WORK

Three components of the Council's work were completed using funds obtained through the EPA Sustainable Development Challenge Grant Program -- the Trends for Indicators of Sustainability; the 1998 Sustainability Accords and Visions of Sustainability; and the Campaign for the 21st Century.

1] *Trends for Indicators of Sustainability*. Published in April 1997 and accompanied by appendices of additional data, this document portrays historic trends for those indicators identified by the Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council (TJSC) as representing the economic, environmental and social assets of the district. The majority of this work was conducted prior to the awarding of the Sustainable Development

Challenge Grant.

2] *1998 Sustainability Accords and Visions of Sustainability*. This report presents a historical narrative of the TJSC's activities and the principles, goals and objectives which guide the Council's work. Coupled with the above indicators for sustainability, it provides tools with which local governments, businesses, non-profit groups and individuals can mark their progress towards sustainability.

3] *Campaign for the 21st Century*. The Campaign was designed to enroll 100 businesses, non-profits and government organizations and 1000 citizens into the priority visions of sustainability as proposed by the Council. Grant funds were used to prepare visual materials, such as presentations and a narrated slide show, and to identify signatories. At the end of the funding period, 10% of the signatories had signed the document.

The scope of work has been pivotal to creating and maintaining dialogues on sustainability within the Thomas Jefferson region. Four public forums were held, and the number of attendees sprang from 90 to over 400 by the third event. Furthermore, the Sustainability Council's work has created a foundation on which other groups can – and have – implement sustainable practices in the workplace. Increased awareness has led to the incorporation of sustainable design features in a new high school and a moderate income housing development. As well, the Accords are now being considered for inclusion in four of the six region's Comprehensive Plans.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council
Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy
Albemarle County
City of Charlottesville
Louisa County
Nelson County